

(a) whether it is a fact that it has been decided to hand over ticket distribution work in the Railways to the private sector;

(b) if so, what are the facts in this regard and the percentage of ticket distribution work in the country, presently being handled by the private sector; and

(c) what are the details of factors responsible for taking a decision to hand over ticket distribution work to the private sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) Distribution of tickets through private parties is not a new phenomena and the system of issue of tickets by private parties such as Out Agents, City Booking Agents, Rail Tourist Agents, Halt Agents, etc. are already there since long time. Besides, RTSAs are appointed to purchase the tickets on behalf of those passengers who do not want to go to reservation office to purchase the tickets. It is difficult to calculate the percentage of ticket distribution work presently being handled by the private parties as no such data is being maintained and the number of Out Agencies, City Booking Agencies etc. changes from time to time. To proliferate retail railway ticketing through the use of Service Providers and terminal operators so that there is saving in the cost for the railways in this regard and for improvement in customer service, Indian Railways has entered into an Memorandum of Understanding with Indian Catering & Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) to facilitate railway ticketing.

Rail line between Ghanauli and Pinjore

3913. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:

SARDAR GURCHARAN SINGH TOHRA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received proposals to lay rail line between Ghanauli and Pinjore *via* Nalagarh and Badi, so that Sri Anandpur Sahib is connected with Delhi through a fast track route;

(b) if so, when the proposal was received;

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(c) whether Government propose to conduct a survey on this route, if so, by when; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal was received in September, 2000.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Keeping in view the very large shelf of pending sanctioned New Line projects and severe constraint of resources, it is not possible to consider construction of the said line for the present. As such, survey has not been considered necessary at this stage.

Manual maintenance of rail track

3914. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the Railway Track are still being manually maintained; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government for maintaining the tracks with machines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) About 50% of track is maintained manually.

(b) Indian Railways has planned progressive mechanization of track maintenance depending on availability of funds.

Life of pads for rail tracks

3915. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that, as per International standards, the pads for rail tracks should have a life of atleast 15 years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that rubber pads of Indian